

2. Questions

1. Lines 89-96. If 10 years pass and an updated plan has not been approved, will there no longer be a management plan in place? Would it be possible to change this section so that the Plan may extend past 10 years if no replacement has been developed?
2. The 10-year plan outlines 4 objectives and over 60 specific actions. Lines 115 and 116 state that the plan is subject to budgetary and priority constraints. Have the human and financial resources necessary to realize these objectives been determined? If so, are the existing resources sufficient to address these initiatives? In Section 10, starting at line 1859, the authors acknowledge that upon approval of the Plan, management partners will develop a companion document which will lay out a framework for action including an implementation plan.
 - a. Will the parties be made responsible for each action be identified at the time of writing the companion document, and will the implementation plan include an evaluation component for the management plan?
 - b. What will be done to ensure that activities which will require increased budget and effort (ie: harvest monitoring) will be implemented?
 - c. Once the Plan is approved, what is the commitment date for the various management bodies to come together to initiate work on the companion document?
 - d. Would it be useful to add a sentence to this section to ensure that the companion document is developed in a timely manner?
3. Lines 89-96. If 10 years pass and an updated plan has not been approved, will there no longer be a management plan in place? Would it be possible to change this section so that the Plan may extend past 10 years if no replacement has been developed?
4. We understand and appreciate that consultation efforts were extensive in producing this Management Plan. Were all of the Actions included in the consultation with both Inuit and Cree, and how was consultation conducted and prioritized for both Inuit and Cree? As it has been several years since consultations occurred, do the authors feel the consultations remain relevant? Are there any consultation records or reports from Cree consultations that could be shared with the Boards?
5. What is the distinction, if any, in terminology between management plan, management framework and management system? Are they used interchangeably?
6. Polar bears are known to travel thousands of kilometres over their lifetime. In order to manage polar bears so that they will be present for the long term, the approach needs to

encompass the range of the bears and involve the jurisdictions and administrative organizations charged with this responsibility. This Plan goes a long way in this regard however, portions of the three polar bear sub-populations under consideration and the associated key organizations involved in their management and harvesting, fall outside the geographic scope of the Plan.

- a. Will this adversely impact achievement of the goals and objectives?
 - b. Are the authors aware of any inconsistencies between this Management Plan and those of adjacent jurisdictions in terms of management of shared subpopulations? If so, how will the inconsistencies be reconciled if the plan is approved as-is.
 - c. Would it be helpful to create a specific action to address working together with organizations outside of the geographic scope of the plan, but with management responsibilities for the polar bear subpopulations?
7. The Threats to Conservation section states that the number of bears has increased over the past 40-50 years. Increasing numbers of bears can lead to a shortage of their prey and a decline in their health, reproduction rates and survival. It can also lead to more bear/human interactions. This situation may be reflective of the population exceeding the carrying capacity of the bears' habitat. Existing literature has identified that this is already evident in Norway. It is not unreasonable to question if this already is, or will be, true for parts of Canada. Should this section be expanded to explain that this situation can, and may already be, occurring in some arctic regions?
8. Approach 1.6 - Maintain age-selective and male-biased harvest (lines 1635-48 and 1869). In neighbouring jurisdictions, male-biased harvest has been removed as an explicit management measure. The Boards have identified some potential problems with being constrained to male-biased harvest:
- a. It may be difficult to achieve some of the actions under approach 4.4 if the Quebec-EMR-NMR jurisdiction is constrained to male-biased harvest in integrating sex selectivity in TAT and/or NQL decisions, while other jurisdictions are not.
 - b. Further, it is possible/probable that in the future different management objectives may be put in place for the different polar bear subpopulations. Male-biased harvest works well in a situation where there is an aim to maximize harvest while maintaining or increasing the polar bear population. If management objectives focus less on maximizing harvest and/or aim to reduce the polar bear population, then being constrained to male-biased harvest will cause issues.
 - c. There is some uncertainty, especially considering IK on the subject, that targeting male polar bears will have the desired affects, especially in the long term. The

Angujjuaq (large male bear) may occupy a unique ecological niche, and disproportionate removal of them may cause ecosystem-level effects. Loss of important genetic diversity could also be an effect.

Question 8 i) Does this objective amount to an NQL? Setting and removing of NQL's is the authority of the Boards. Are the authors of this management plan seeking to have such an NQL established for the area of application of this Management Plan through this approval of this plan?

Question 8 ii): Given the above, is it more appropriate to rephrase Approach 1.6 to identify sex-selective harvest as a tool which could be used in management, rather than constraining management to using male-biased harvest?

Question 8 iii): Approach 1.6 is "Maintain... male-biased harvest". The word "maintain" could be interpreted as constraining the Board's management flexibility and defining the use of a NQL, which the Boards may wish to avoid. Again, can the terminology in this section be re-framed to identify age and sex-selective harvest as possible management tools, and avoiding terminology which could be seen as defining (even in-part) an NQL?

9. Approach 2.2, Action 2.2.2 - "Identifying the gaps" seems to fall short of what is needed to document Indigenous Knowledge. Should it go further, and have an action to address these gaps?
10. Action 2.4.2 Community Based Monitoring Programs are welcome, but Community-Driven Research Projects are more in line with what is called for by most indigenous groups. Could this section be reworded to include this focus?
11. Action 3.3.3 seems to be missing a category, as some residents of the region are non-indigenous. Should this be rectified, do all non-indigenous count as visitors, or is there a different reason it is worded this way?
12. Approach 3.4.
 - a. Action 3.4.1 is to "reaffirm the engagement of management partners not to send polar bear cubs... to zoos and aquariums." Is there already a policy or regulation indicating this is not allowed?
 - b. Was any consultation done specifically on this matter?
 - c. Depending on the answer of A and B, should there be an action added for developing policy or understanding on how to deal with orphaned cubs?
 - d. What is the author's point of view on how the management of orphaned cubs should interact with any TAT limitations that may be put in place?

13. Starting on Line 269 of Appendix A, there is a statement that reads "There are three

Nunavik Inuit communities (Inukjuak, Umiujaq, and Kuujjuaraapik) and three coastal Cree communities (Whapmagoostui, Waskaganish, and Chisasibi) that potentially harvest from this subpopulation". The 5-year average reported harvest for the 2014/15 to 2018/19 period is 12.4 bears per year."

- a. Why was this worded to imply that there is a deliberate harvest by 3/5 coastal Cree communities, when this is in fact not true? The polar bear is not actively harvested for sustenance or cultural practices by the Cree of the EMR and this text leaves the reader the impression that the Cree purposely harvested some of these bears. Data compiled by the Quebec government for the period 2001 to 2016/17 do not show any harvest by the Cree. Rather all bears killed by the Cree during this period were Defense of Life and Property kills. This distinction is important. Further, perhaps mention of the Nunavik communities should be kept separate from the EMR communities to illustrate the distinction between deliberate harvest vs DLP kills applied to the TAT?
- b. Why were just 3 of the 5 coastal Cree communities singled out if the potential to encounter polar bears exist along the entirety of the EMR coastline and offshore islands? There is the potential for all 5 coastal Cree communities in the EMR to kill polar bears in defense of life and property. In order to avoid confusion, perhaps this sentence could be re-written to clarify that the coastal Cree communities in the EMR do not actively harvest polar bears, that the only kills to occur over the past two decades have been DLP kills, and that all 5 coastal EMR Cree communities risk human-bear interactions while practising seasonal activities?

These final two questions are very general, and are intended to give the authors/parties the opportunity to point to relevant sections of the management which may not have been addressed in the questions above.

14. We understand that this plan is not intended to infringe upon the full range of responsibilities of the Boards to set TAT and NQL. Were there any sections of the Management plan where this needed to be especially carefully considered?
15. In what specific ways will this management plan lead to better available information if the Board must make TAT or NQL decisions?